

The ERFINS Bulletin

The official publication of The Perfins Club, Inc., APS affiliate 57

UNITED STATES PERFIN CATALOG

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The initial draft of the forthcoming new edition of the *Catalog of United States Perfins* has now been completed, although there is still a lot of work to do before publication. The draft has to be proofread, updated, new data added to earlier sections, etc. before printing. Most importantly, some disconcerting ambiguities must be clarified.

The most important problem to be addressed comes from the Additions & Corrections supplements #1 through #6, plus some unpublished additions. Some added patterns are completely different than any in the 1979 Catalog. However, the majority are fairly close variations of previously listed patterns. A great deal of work had already been carried out in attempting to decide which of these are replacements for earlier patterns (or just as likely, the original patterns which were replaced by the listed patterns) and which are probably die varieties in multiple-head machines. This has not been an easy task and can probably never be completely accurate or satisfy all collectors. The main criterion for decisions -- given two or more very similar patterns -- is the period of usage of each, given the usual absence of strips of stamps showing whether the machine was single- or multiple-head devices. If two patterns dovetail in their period of usage, then they are probably two different patterns, with one replacing the other. If they have the same period of usage, then a decision might be made that they are just die varieties.

The other part of the problem with the added patterns are inconsistencies among entries. For example, consider pattern S154, SIU. In the 1979 Catalog it was positively identified as used by the State University of Iowa. In the A&C pages pattern S154A was added. S154 has been found on stamp issues from 1922 through 1938 (Prexy). Pattern S154A is found from the 1938 through 1984 issues. It is apparent that pattern S154A was the original pattern and was replaced during the time of use of the Presidential series with pattern S154. That is fine, but now the problem arises with the positive identification of the user. Was the positive identification used in the 1979 Catalog for pattern S154 or 154A? Finally, in the absence of definitive data, the positive data, the positive identification will probably be kept for the original pattern, although this may not be correct in all cases. Nevertheless, some record of positive identification should be kept for the pattern and its companion.

There are many other examples. For the letter S, there are:

S35, S35A, S35B and S35C
S47 and S47A
S50 and S50.5
S51 and S52
S53.5 and S54
S82.5 and S82.5A

S88 and S88.5
S99 and S99A
S110 and S110.5
S114, S114.5 and S114.5A
S137 and S137.2

The list goes on and on, through the entire alphabet. The above list should make the type of problem clear.

This situation can be alleviated, if not completely eliminated, provided that lots of covers can be located for these patterns. The plea is for each collector who has perfins covers to look for those covers which might shed light on patterns with this problem. It does not matter if your cover shows the original identification was correct or if you have a cover showing the identification for the pattern in the A&C pages. Either provides hard data. Some of these patterns are so close to one another that it is difficult or impossible to determine which of the patterns is on a cover. Even so, a photocopy of the cover sent to the Editor could help solve the problem. If there is a legible postmark, then it may be possible to determine which pattern it probably is from the usage data developed by the Editor. Photocopies would be appreciated for any covers for which this problem exists. If you have many covers to copy, your costs will be gladly refunded. If you think the Editor might be able to determine the pattern from the actual cover but not from a photocopy, please send the cover. All covers will be returned after photocopying.

If many collectors will help out, many of our uncertainties may be eliminated. Remember, you may have the key cover that no one else has submitted. Thank you in advance for your help in producing a better and more accurate U.S. Catalog.

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